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Approved For Release 2005/04/19 : CIA-RDP86T00608R000400130026-7

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Former Chancellor Brandt to Visit Moscow

Former chancellor Brandt's main task during his visit to the Soviet Union on May 14-18, will be to reassure Soviet leaders that the Schmidt government places a high priority on good relations with the East.

The visit stems from an invitation by Brezhnev and Soviet officials are hinting that the West Germans reciprocate later this year. This eagerness for contacts at a highly visible level suggests that Moscow's complaints that Bonn has not done enough to further detente are not so serious as to stand in the way of Brezhnev's "peace policy" toward Western Europe.

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Chancellor Schmidt's endorsement of the trip reflects his intention to devote more attention to Ostpolitik.

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Brandt, chairman of the Social Democratic Party, has no formal mandate to speak for the Schmidt government, but he will undoubtedly find himself in the role of intermediary. For the Soviets, Brandt remains

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the principal exponent of reconciliation, and Brezhnev reportedly has developed a good personal relationship with the former chancellor.

Aside from listening to their complaint, however, Brandt will have little to offer the Soviets. The Soviets will probably point out that Bonn, unlike London and Paris, still refuses to provide subsidized credits for trade and joint industrial projects. Some West German officials--Brandt probably included--feel that promoting exports to the East is crucial at a time when demand for German goods in the economically-troubled West has slackened. For the moment, however, Schmidt and his financial advisers do not seem ready to alter the current policy.

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ANNEXPortuguese Election to Proceed on Schedule

The Portuguese will go to the polls Friday--the first anniversary of the overthrow of the Caetano regime--to participate in their first multiparty election in nearly 50 years. The stated purpose of the election is to choose a representative assembly to draft a new constitution, but in fact a substantial portion of that document has already been formulated by the ruling Armed Forces Movement and accepted by the country's major political parties. Although the results of the election--which will not be officially released until at least four days after the voting--will not affect the composition of the government or significantly alter its policies, it will provide the first reading of popular reaction to the leftward course the Movement has charted for Portugal.

March 11 a Watershed

Elections for the 247-member constituent assembly were promised by the Movement when it came to power last April. In mid-February, however, the Movement, hoping to present the assembly with a fait accompli, approved and circulated its own proposals for key provisions of the constitution designed to insure a continuing role for the military in the government.

The proposals ran into serious opposition from the moderate Socialist and Popular Democratic parties, as well as the moderate-rightist Social Democratic Center. Shortly

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before the abortive March 11 coup attempt, moderate party officials privately expressed confidence that the Movement would accept limitations on the wide-ranging powers it was seeking. Further indications that moderates were successfully reasserting themselves at that time were seen in reports that several key radical leftist leaders in the Movement--including Prime Minister Vasco Goncalves--had lost decisively in elections for councils within the various armed services.

The moderates' hopes were dashed, however, by the abortive coup attempt on March 11. Immediately after the uprising, which was blamed on conservative former president Antonio de Spinola and his supporters, the Movement--with radical officers again in firm control--announced that it was assuming sole control of Portugal's political affairs. It set up an all-military Supreme Revolutionary Council to supplant both Movement and government decision-making bodies. A cabinet shuffle brought more Communists into the government.

Moving quickly to consolidate its power, the Movement nationalized all banks and insurance companies, arrested prominent businessmen, and drove conservative party leaders into hiding or exile. The Movement also postponed the elections from April 12 to April 25.

The conservative Christian Democratic Party was accused of complicity in the coup attempt and prevented from participating in the elections. The extreme leftist Reorganizing Movement of the Proletariat Party and Worker-Peasant Alliance were also prohibited from electoral participation.

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In such an atmosphere of intimidation, the Movement again confronted the parties--this time with even tougher institutionalization proposals. Under the implied threat of alienation or dissolution, the moderate parties agreed to continued Movement dominance of Portugal's institutions for a period of 3 to 5 years.

### The Campaign

The election campaign officially began on April 2. Stiff new penalties for disrupting political activities were enacted by the Revolutionary Council and, surprisingly, the campaign itself was relatively free of violent disruptions which had marred political rallies in the preceding months. Even the Social Democratic Center, the former electoral partner of the banned Christian Democrats and a primary target for earlier extremist harassment, was able to hold several rallies without incident. All parties received equal time on radio and television, although coverage was very one-sided in the press, which is dominated by the Communists and their sympathizers.

Fears of election rigging have been dispelled to some extent by the manner in which local electoral boards were set up. Moderate parties reportedly will have adequate representation in nearly every precinct to guard against vote fraud. Also, in the event Communist Party loyalists attempt to vote early and then obstruct their moderate opponents,

all ballots in the precinct will be declared invalid and another vote taken later. Coverage of the election by foreign correspondents has been encouraged. Efforts have also been made to avoid fraud in the vote count, but some

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irregularities are likely to creep in despite these precautions.

#### Role of the Church

With the exception of its opposition in January to the Communist-backed unitary labor law, the Portuguese church has maintained a judicious silence on political matters. In recent months, however, the church has been subjected to increasing pressure by Communists and other radical groups.

In mid-April the nation's bishops met in Fatima and issued a statement implicitly supporting the moderate parties' election efforts. Although not condemning the Communists by name, the bishops urged Catholics to vote against those parties whose doctrines conflict with church teaching. This statement is expected to be interpreted by many parish priests as a signal to support moderate parties from the pulpit.

The Fatima communique also took issue with the Movement's appeal to undecided voters to submit blank votes to show their confidence in Portugal's revolutionary leadership. The church, seeing the use of blank ballots as a maneuver to reduce the expected moderate majority, has condemned their use, as have the moderate parties.

#### The Parties

Although the Portuguese Communist Party and its close ally, the Portuguese Democratic Movement, have waged an impressive campaign, recent polls show that they have little chance of finishing better than

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third in the balloting. The Communists have been aided by a superior organizational structure and funds from the Soviet Union--  
[redacted] but they now seem to be suffering from overexposure and are not expected to do well outside Lisbon and some areas of the rural south. The last ditch attempt by some elements of the Movement to give the Communists a boost by praising their role in thwarting the March 11 coup attempt is not likely to make a significant improvement in their showing.

The Socialist Party seemed to pick up momentum in the waning days of the campaign after a slow start. The Socialists closed out their campaign with a rally Sunday night that filled a Lisbon stadium with more than 100,000 enthusiastic supporters. The Socialists were aided by the West German Social Democratic Party which provided an advisory group and generous financial assistance. Advisors from Britain, France and Sweden returned home early in the campaign discouraged by the Socialists' lack of organization.

The Popular Democratic Party, doubtless encouraged by its continued participation in the government, was able to campaign in spite of a serious shortage of resources. Following the March 11 uprising, it successfully weathered a storm of Communist criticism by closely identifying itself with Movement policies--it was the first party to condemn the coup attempt and to welcome the nationalization measures. The Popular Democrats have a broad base of support among Portugal's basically conservative electorate, particularly in the north.

The center-right Social Democratic Center's election hopes were dealt a serious blow when their partners on a joint slate,

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the Christian Democrats, were prohibited from participating in the election after the March 11 uprising. The Social Democratic Center was allowed to substitute its own candidates, however, and could still make a good showing. The party should benefit from the church's recent involvement, since it is the only party whose program the church can support unequivocally. Its gains, however, are likely to be at the expense of the Socialists and Popular Democrats.

These five parties--the Communists, Democratic Movement, Socialists, Popular Democrats, and Social Democratic Center--are expected to draw the bulk of the vote, perhaps as much as 90 percent. The seven remaining parties in the field of twelve, mostly leftist splinter groups, will share the rest.

Given a vote relatively free from tampering, the moderate, non-communist parties will almost certainly pull a clear majority. Some estimates give as high as 65-70 percent to the combined vote of the Socialists, Popular Democrats, and Social Democratic Center, who are expected to finish in that order with the Communists possibly moving into third place.

#### Political Impact

The vote will undoubtedly be open to various interpretations. A large majority for the moderate parties will not be seen as a vote of confidence for the Armed Forces Movement, but it may not be viewed as a decisive defeat either. The moderate parties have already agreed to the Movement's continued rule, and all but the Social Democratic Center have platforms that advocate many of the same policies espoused by the Movement.

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The impact the radical officers who are currently running things fear most is the possible strengthening of moderate elements within the military. A resounding victory for the moderate parties might provide the impetus for a move within the Movement to restrict the influence the Communists currently exert on the government.

Admiral Rosa Coutinho, who seems increasingly to be assuming a position of leadership in the Movement, might be the man to lead an effort to head off the Communists' push for ever increasing power. Coutinho has spoken of forming a new party, ideologically somewhere between the Socialist and Communist parties, which would become the civilian partner of the Armed Forces Movement. Such a party might be the vehicle not only to reduce the Communist role, but to water down any moderate surge that results from the election.

In any event, whatever the outcome of the election, it will have minimal impact on the course of the government. Both President Costa Gomes and Admiral Coutinho have said they will not feel constrained by the outcome. The Armed Forces Movement has set Portugal on a path toward socialism from which they will not deviate. Similarly, the Movement seems dedicated to moving toward an international position closer to the non-aligned group--maintaining its ties with the West but at the same time improving relations with the Third World and Eastern Europe.

The election will not silence the opposition to this course either. Conservatives and moderates who oppose the current leadership were thrown off balance by the events of March 11 and what followed. They continue

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to be disorganized and unprepared to reassert themselves, many of them clinging to the hope that the elections will improve their position.

Whether or not it does, there is likely to be a renewed effort to organize against the radical leadership in the months to come. The continuing deterioration of Portugal's economy may provide additional allies to the opposition. At the same time, increasing economic difficulties could lead to something more closely resembling anarchy as the extreme leftist factions seek to take advantage of the confused situation.

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